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# Issac Liu wants to win grand final for a lost schoolmate

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Isaac Liu, scoring a try for the Roosters, will be playing for a lost mate if he makes the grand final. Picture: Mark Evans

There is a piece of Isaac Liu that wants to win a grand final for himself. A piece that wants to win it for his teammates. A piece that wants to win it for his family and friends. And a piece that wants to win it for Mosese Fotuika, the Wests Tigers youngster who played at Keebra Park High School with Liu and took his own life in 2013.

"It was sad to hear about what happened," Liu said.

"When we came down to Sydney we stayed in contact. When you lose a friend, it is really sad. You play and use that part to strive on and get through as well.

"We were the same build, same humbleness. He reminds me of myself. Just thinking of him when I play, I have that bit of him to play for.

"I think about him, think about family, think about everyone in my life."

Liu has been one of the quietest achievers in a side that has made loud noises all season. The Roosters are one win away from a grand final appearance, with only Brisbane standing between them and another shot at the title.

Liu was there last time they won the premiership, albeit in a spectator's role. Having spent the week preparing to play in the 2013 decider, he and Dylan Napa were squeezed out at the last minute when Luke O'Donnell and Boyd Cordner proved their fitness.

"When I missed out, it was a bit disappointing," Liu said.

"But I was just happy to be there and be part of the win. I still feel like I am a part of it, just playing most of the year."

His pride at being a fixture in the side this season has been amplified by the presence of another childhood friend. Liu and Siosua Taukeiahi grew up barely 10m from each other on the mean streets of Auckland.

Their days started with the walk to school and finished with a game of footy or manhunt. After going their separate ways, they were brought back together when Taukeiahi was lured to the Roosters.

"We grew up in the same 'hood, lived pretty much 10 metres from each other," Liu said.

"We were definitely good mates. We played footy, manhunt — it's a hide and seek game you play at night. You go all over the streets, houses.

"After high school, we didn't really stay in contact. I came over here a few years later, heard about Siosua coming over and said 'I know this kid'.

"To get this far with him is awesome. He has been going really good. It's good to see another friend from New Zealand come through."

While Liu lost contact with Taukeiahi, he never stopped being an inspiration to his younger colleague.

"He used to pick me up in the morning and we would walk down to school together," Taukeiahi said.

"He would also walk past my house and we would continue to walk to school. It was pretty rough. We weren't gang members. But we were all in the same street, went to school together, hung out together.

"I was sitting back at home and watching TV and I saw Isaac playing. Seeing a bloke from Otahuhu, playing NRL for the Roosters — it sort of inspired me."

BRENT READ, SENIOR SPORTS WRITER

Brent Read is one of rugby league's agenda setters but is also among the nation's most well-known golf writers. He also covers Olympic sports, writing with authority, wit and enthusiasm. Brent began his career in s... [Read more](#)



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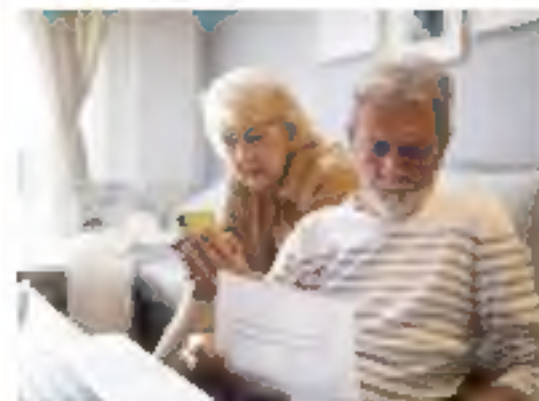


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